

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EURE-00 SSC-01 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15
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PRS-01 /056 W
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P R 141324Z FEB 77
FM AMEMBASSY BELGRADE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9576
INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMCONSUL ZAGREB

C O N F I D E N T I A L BELGRADE 906

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT YO
SUBJ: DJURANOVIC TO REPLACE BIJEDIC

1. VESELIN DJURANOVIC, PRESIDENT OF THE LEAGUE OF COMMUNISTS OF MONTENEGRO, HAS BEEN CHOSEN AS THE CANDIDATE TO SUCCEED THE LATE DZEMAL BIJEDIC AS PRESIDENT OF THE FEDERAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL, ACCORDING TO RADIO NEWS FEB 14. ELECTION BY NATIONAL ASSEMBLY IS EXPECTED TO BE ONLY A FORMALITY.

2. DJURANOVIC IS A CAREER PARTY OFFICIAL. NOW 52, HE WAS A PARTISAN DURING WORLD WAR II AND SUBSEQUENTLY HELD POLITICAL AND JOURNALISTIC JOBS IN HIS NATIVE MONTENEGRO, SERVING FOR ALMOST TEN YEARS AS PRESIDENT OF THE LC. HE LACKS PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE AT THE FEDERAL LEVEL AND HAS NO KNOWN ECONOMIC EXPERTISE.

3. WHEN THE AMERICAN AMBASSADOR CALLED ON HIM IN 1964 HE WAS "NERVOUS" AND "FAIRLY UNCOMMUNICATIVE".

4. COMMENT: CHOICE OF DJURANOVIC FOLLOWS YUGOSLAV PRACTICE OF ROTATING SENIOR POSITIONS AMONG NATIONALITIES
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AND KEEPING OVERALL DISTRIBUTION IN BALANCE. MONTENEGRINS WERE IN LINE FOR FEC JOB BECAUSE MOST OTHER NATIONALITIES HAD HELD IT PREVIOUSLY. SINCE DOBROSLAV CULAFIC, ONE OF THE THREE VICE PRESIDENTS OF THE FEC, IS ALSO A MONTENEGRIN, HE MAY NOW BE ROTATED ELSEWHERE AND POSSIBLY TO REPLACE DJURANOVIC IN THE MONTENEGRIN LC.

5. NOTHING IS KNOWN OF DJURANOVIC'S
POLITICAL PREDILECTIONS. AS A CAREER PARTY MAN FROM
A REPUBLIC WITH A HISTORY OF AFFINITY FOR RUSSIA AND A
SHIPYARD HEAVILY DEPENDENT ON SOVIET TRADE, HE MAY NOT BE
WELL-DISPOSED TO THE UNITED STATES. ON THE OTHER HAND,
THE FEC PRESIDENCY HAS NOT BEEN AN INFLUENTIAL JOB AND
HIS VIEWS, WHATEVER THEY IN FACT ARE, WILL CARRY LITTLE
WEIGHT IF PAST PRACTICE HOLDS TRUE. THE FEC PRESIDENCY
MAY BE MORE INFLUENTIAL, HOWEVER, WHEN TITO'S DEATH
REMOVES HIS POWERFUL INFLUENCE. AS ONE OF THE
YOUNGER LEADERS, DJURANOVIC WILL ALSO BE IN A POSITION TO
MOVE FURTHER UP IN THE NATIONAL HIERARCHY IN THE FUTURE.
YORK

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